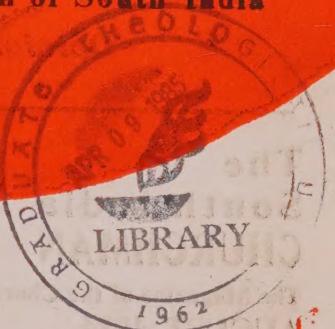




# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● AUGUST 1984



men: Co-workers with God "



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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

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AUGUST 1984

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## 25 Years Ago

The Women's Fellowship in Punganur has gone having regular meetings on Saturdays and visiting Hindu homes and distributing hand bills once a month. We have followed for our study—'Lessons on Christian Homes' and later the book 'Christ in our Homes' by C. H. Graham. Every member takes leadership in the meetings and the discussions have been free and worthwhile. One new feature is the building up of a library from which the women can borrow books. We have been able to procure some small books and pamphlets and we hope to improve it as time goes on. Christmas was drawing near and we were turning our attention to sewing garments for little children in the villages.

Village school teachers are holding meetings and following the same book for *Bible Study*. They are trying to get the women to be ready to take the pledge and join the Women's Fellowship. The conferences have done a great deal to influence the village women by the testimony of those that attended it.

—Churchman 1951

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# Women Agonised— Struggling Towards New Horizon

MRS. CLARA CLARKE, *Madras, Convener of the Conference*

Yes ! Women have been very much agonised and disappointed at the way they have been treated. The cry of women all over the world in homes, churches and societies is alas 'A cry in the Wilderness'. The newspapers, women's magazines of different nations and continents carry the dreadful information of injustice to women, discrimination of sexes and other glaring social evils. Brides being burnt alive or young ones being driven to take their own lives (for no fault of their own) but because they could no more tolerate the cruelty, the callousness and the greed of the so called in Laws. Rape is another cry of not merely young girls, but even the toddlers and five year olds are not being spared. They are raped and murdered. What brutality ! What animal behaviour. But we women just sit back comfortably or at the most one say, 'poor kid ! What apathy !'.

The other even persisting problem is 'eve teasing'. I just read a comment about this in one of the women's magazines. She says, that film world encourages 'eve teasing'. In one of the Hindi films it is described that the hero in trying to woo the heroine uses all kinds of methods, including chasing the poor girl in his car along with some ruffians who are his so called friends. Isn't this the type of behaviour that our road-side Romeos try to imitate in all our big cities, why even in small towns. What about the obscene posters on the walls in every nook and corner. Every advertisement must exhibit an obscene picture. Oh ! There are many more problems of women that I can go on enumerating, not to forget the glance of a big per cent of women in the houses where the husbands are the so called Lords and Masters. What is the answer ? Prostitution, ill treatment of the wives due to drug and alcohol addiction should not be forgotten.

Conscious of the above-mentioned agonies and problems of women, the Sixth Quadrennial Conference of the Church of South India Women's Fellowship chose for their deliberations and discussions the theme 'Women Co-workers with God'. The conference was held at Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirapalli from the 14th to the 27th of May, 1984. The guest speaker in dealing with the theme created an awareness in the minds of the delegates regarding the issues I had mentioned earlier and many more issues. She pointed out that the women in the Church are not really allowed to be liberated and to get their rightful demand and places even though she is used for odd jobs in the Church. We preach the gospel of Jesus Christ who liberated women, two thousand years ago !

Since this edition of the South India Churchman will contain reports and articles about the conference I would first highlight the claim for women's status as workers and co-workers. I am deeply grateful to the editor for giving the honour, as Convener of the Conference, to be

the guest editor of this special issue. We, women are happy that the Church of South India and the Officers of the Synod have been encouraging us in our programmes and development schemes by their interest and financial assistance.

We do appear to be making a Big Noise about recognition, placement, dignity, partnership and better treatment. Is this not necessary ? Is this rightful ? Have we a voice in our Churches ? Do we have the right percentage in the decision-making bodies of our Churches ? Have we been given sufficient leadership roles ? If God has made us male and female, jew and gentile alike, why then is this discrimination ?

Women everywhere, are taken for granted and much more in our Indian Churches. We are kept in hiding most of the time and occasionally brought on the mantle piece as show pieces, only to be put back again. We are used for the convenience of the Church and for the convention of the Church and not for the conversion of the Church. We certainly can do as well as men or even better than men, but alas, we are treated as second class citizens. Surely we need to be aware of this treatment and may be we will have to revolt, rebel and revolutionise against our second class citizenship. The God of the male is also the God of the female, whom He made in His own image—is no partial God. Perhaps we women are partly to be blamed. The lack of awareness needs to be attributed to our apathy ; we have not been demonstrative ; we have not reacted sharply to male domination and male superiority. We must shake off our lethargy and claim our dignity.

Women both rural and urban should be educated and trained in development concepts. Development is not merely a word for agriculture, industry and technology, but also for the status of womanhood. We should in our programmes and projects include literacy (adult education and non-formal education). Our women should be taught the many privileges and rights the Indian women have been given in our country and to claim them.

Along with development and education we need to tackle the many sociological problems and issues. We have very few leaders among the schedule castes, tribes and the backward communities. Women in these areas are still ill treated, exploited and raped. Along with the development of our country we also find an increase of crime to women. This seems to be more common among the unfortunate, downtrodden women in the rural areas. Why ? Why ? this treatment to the under-privileged and less fortunate, brethren ? I think, the nation and the Church should take this question seriously and meet their needs and demands to give them better life.

Let me now throw a challenge to the women of the Church. Have we been towards not to fight the social evil of dowry? We are offering more and more at the alter of communalism. As mentioned earlier more and more women and young girls are being burnt and murdered and a few and their lives in a painful and agonising way, only to be sacrifices of male domination and in-law greed. Can we organise a peaceful protest march of young girls to overcome this social evil. Shouldn't the Church take a definite stand on this? On the contrary in some places the pastors go to bless the dowry. I suppose a certain percentage of the amount goes to the Church.

In conclusion, I would like to commend our being workers and co-workers with God to the serious thinking

of the Church. We are not asking the privileges or benefits. We are only demanding our Christian rights. The Church should give more thinking and certainly must do much more by way of action towards the new horizon. May be, we have to struggle, we have to grapple with the problems of human rights. The platform speeches and pious resolutions are no good if we cannot put them into action. Action groups have to be started in every Women's Fellowship to help women in this our struggle towards new horizon. Along side with men, we are also called to be builders of God's Church and His Kingdom just as we have been united with our life partners to build our Christian Homes. May God help us to witness the new horizon which is our Hope in Christ.

## Women Can be Better priests: Teresa

NEW DELHI, April 11

Noble Laureate Mother Teresa feels women are temperamentally better equipped to become priests than are men.

'No man can even come close to the love and compassion a woman is capable to giving' she said in an interview with UNI.

'As I love, no man can love. Women are the heart of the world.'

She said women are the creators of men and embody both male and female attributes in them.

'Woman is always superior to man. A woman priest will perform better and her message will percolate down to the roots', said Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic.

The head of the Missionaries of Charity said although there was much talk of equality between the sexes, woman, being the pivot of the family, was more competent to impart the message of love and devotion to society.

However, she added, women were to some extent responsible for the present state of the world.

'When a woman can kill her own child, what else can you expect from the rest of the world? Love, Charity, evil, misery, good and bad, everything begins at home.'

She condemned abortion as a means of birth control and said no one had the right to take life. 'Birth control should be a natural process', the Noble Laureate said.

Replying to a question, Mother Teresa said it pains her most to find that people had little time to spare for the needy and distressed.

'Just a little attention could save a life. If less time was spent on discussing and more on helping the poor of the poor, the world can be changed.'

She said the feeling behind the gesture was all important. 'The less we have, the more we can give. The more we have the less we give.'

On media's contribution to promoting love and compassion in society, Mother Teresa said its role upto now had not been very constructive.

Mass media can play a constructive role but it concentrated more on the negative aspects of life.

'The world is full of beautiful things. Why not tell the people about these? Everyday the papers are full of reports of war and killings. Where is it going to lead us? I pray for the victims.'

—UNI

## The Quadrennial Conference

MRS. KRUPAVENI PRAKASA RAO  
President, C.S.I. Women's Fellowship

The Inauguration of the 6th Quadrennial Conference of the C.S.I. Women's Fellowship significantly coincided with the day when the credit of mounting the 8848-metre-high Everest (the highest peak in the world) was achieved by an Indian woman for the first time. Yes, though it was a mere coincidence, as was pointed out by the Moderator, Church of South India, in his Inaugural address, it was really an achievement worth comparison that about 400 women delegates from all the dioceses of the Church of South India gathered at Trichy for the conference leaving all their burdens at home.

The conference was full of interesting features, a very important, and worth mentioning feature being, the celebration of Holy Communion by the Women Priests. It was an awe inspiring service and many of the women who participated in it were seen with tears of joy in their

eyes for being able to see their long cherished dreams come true in their lives. The credit of making this possible goes to the Church of South India who have passed the Women's Ordination. The CSI Women's Fellowship once again acknowledges this with gratitude.

While the challenging speeches of Smt. Gopala Ratnam burnt the hearts and inspired women to come out boldly to fight for their rights, an interesting and encouraging aspect that we, the women, are yoked together with God in His ministry was brought in by Dr. Doraisingh. All the speakers and the Bible study leader have brought out several aspects of the main theme of the conference 'Women-Co-workers with God' and the delegates went home after the conference, having been challenged to do their best as responsible co-workers with God in executing His mandate which our Lord proclaimed in St. Lk 4: 18,19.

# “Women: Co-Workers With God”

MOST REV. I. JESUDASAN, Moderator

## Introduction

This theme is taken from I Cor. 3 : 9 ‘For we are fellow-workers with God’—R.S.V. (Labourers together with God—A.V.) The context takes us to the Corinthian Church situation where Corinthian Christians were boastful of their wisdom in dividing the Church on the merits of those servants of God like Paul Apolos, and Peter, who laboured among them. In that context Paul speaks of God’s hidden wisdom as revealed in Christ which includes God’s mission to the lost world and those servants whom God uses as His co-workers or fellow labourers for His mission.

What a wonder—what a mystery—that we men and women are called to be co-workers with God. This is not a statement coming from a religious fanatic. Paul knew what he was speaking about. We fear and tremble even at the very thought of such a glorious, holy and almighty God. How can it be possible to serve such a God? In Jesus Christ His Blessed Son, God emptied Himself and took the form of a servant and died on the Cross for us sinners. He lives forever interceding for us. It is He who once accepted graciously the services of humble men and women, now calls us weak and sinful persons as we are to work with Him. In this situation of grace and mercy of God, we make this claim that we are co-workers with God in His mission.

The Bible is the record of God’s Mission. It is God’s love seeking to restore man to Himself and to each other. It began when man lost his paradise of God’s love due to his unbelief. Man’s rebellion against God began to produce its evil effects when Cain murdered his brother Abel. God’s love sought to challenge man with the question ‘Where is your brother?’ When God called Abraham and invited him to take part in His saving plan, once again we see the same seeking love of God. God’s love acting in Mission is well manifested when God deputes Moses as His Ambassador to liberate God’s people from the Egyptian captivity. ‘I have seen the affliction on my people who are in Egypt and I have heard their cry because of their task masters. I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them.... I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth, my people out of Egypt’ (Ex. 3 : 7, 10). The life and work of Jesus Christ are described by the Evangelists as the Supreme manifestation of God’s love in action overcoming, all forms of estrangements and reconciling man to himself and to God. God’s design of His saving mission is fully and finally revealed in the Ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and thereby the inauguration of God’s Kingdom took place. This decisive act of God in Jesus Christ (1) reveals the total mission of God, (2) opens the source of life for the healing of nations (3) brings

to light the true nature and need of fallen humanity and (4) calls and inspires people to be labourers together with God till God’s Kingdom manifests in its fullness.

## 1. God’s Mission in Jesus Christ

Mission of God in its wholeness was revealed and inaugurated in Jesus Christ in a special way. It is expressed by the biblical term : ‘Kingdom of God’. We read in Matt. 4 : 23 ‘Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom’, in Lk. 4 : 43 ‘I must preach the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose’, and in Mk. 1 : 15 ‘Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom of God saying, the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand and believe in the Gospel’. The inaugural proclamation of Jesus about the Kingdom ministry is found in the famous Nazareth manifesto : ‘the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Lk. 4 : 18-19. It is interesting to note that Jesus continued the ‘Kingdom talks’ in His resurrection appearances recorded in the gospels. The same mission was carried on by the disciples. St. Paul spent his whole life, preaching the Kingdom of God (Acts 20 : 25, 28 : 24, 31).

The Kingdom is both present experience and future hope. The experience of forgiveness, transformation and love and hope of fulfilment in the midst of frustrations, fragmentations, ambiguities in history and in the midst of suffering and death. The Lord will come but He is already at work and He has called us to work with Him. Jesus invites His disciples to enter into the Kingdom to join the movement of the Kingdom in preaching teaching, healing, forgiving, serving, loving and rebuilding.

## 2. Jesus Christ the source of Life

Unless we are sure of the source from where salvation comes and unless we are really in touch with that real source of life, we cannot be co-workers with God. We are quite familiar with the ‘I am’ saying of Jesus Christ. They point to the unique and central place he holds in God’s mission to the world. He is the way, the life and the truth. He is the resurrection and life. He is the Good shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. He is the true vine. Only if His disciples abide in Him can they have life and bear much fruit. If they do not allow themselves to be washed by Him they have no share in His Kingdom. Like Mary Magdalene each one of us should be able to say ‘I have seen the Lord’.

God's people very often go astray from the source of life and sometimes even put their trust on things that are convenient to them. This has happened very often in us and in the Church. God calls His people to repent and return to the source of life so that they might be channels of His blessings.

The complaint of God as recorded in the second chapter of Jeremiah, is quite revealing.

There are many Gods and many lords. The so-called gods and lords in heaven or on earth continue to claim allegiance of millions of people. In the midst of such claims we hold that here is one Lord for all, even Jesus Christ through whom are all things and through whom we exist. We are being recreated in His image.

### 3. The needy world

There is a needy world, the world God so loved as to send His only son to die upon the cross. This is the world for which Jesus laid down his life and rose again victorious defeating the dark forces of death and letting loose the powers of love and compassion to transform life on the earth. As the Father had sent Jesus Christ to this world, anointed by the Holy Spirit to bear the marks of His cross for the salvation of mankind.

We live in a world where people continue to worship false gods such as wealth, power, etc. People still worship whom they do not know. We live in a world where our brothers and sisters continue to suffer under sin and fear. Millions of people labour under heavy burden of discrimination, oppression and exploitation. People with varied disabilities, continue to wait for help. Our Society is full of people considered useless and a burden to others.

Acts of disrespect to women are increasing in our country. We are deeply distressed by the recent incidents wherein three Tribal Christian girls were subjected to rape by two Policemen in Ranchi and by the arrest and harassment of 61 women and men in Bangalore who expressed concern over the growing violence on women. The plight of women and children in broken homes, the evil of dowry system, continuing poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy in villages, bonded labour, etc., speak to the sensitive souls of the anguish of God's heart. Do we realise that we are under the mandate of Christ to go to the uttermost part of the earth and into the deeper layers of human suffering as fellow labourers with God?

### 4. Call to be fellow-workers with God

We have found the source of life and we have seen the needy world. We are called to make the link between them both as fellow-workers with God. Let us show our concern for people in concrete actions. Let us demonstrate that the power of God which raised Jesus from the dead is operative today and the blessings of new life can be appropriated in the name of Jesus here and now. We are to work unitedly as fellow-labourers with God. In the context of leadership crisis in the Corinthian Church Paul strongly pleads for united action to fulfil the mission of God. When the four persons carried the paralytic

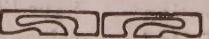
man to Jesus, the source of life, they demonstrated their unity in action. If these four persons had worked in four different ways we could well imagine the plight of the poor sick man. Our petty quarrels, personality conflicts, struggle for power and manipulation for important positions often make the world situation still worse. Such divided actions add to the misery of the world as well as to the weakening of our efforts to promote God's kingdom on earth.

Our mission is to inaugurate new ways, new experiments, new signs of the coming Kingdom. But we are called to start with ourselves and with the Church adventuring new style of life, new beginnings. Sometimes our heart resists change and longs for former ways. It requires a change of heart for the acceptance of change. After the Pentecost the community of new Christians changed its life-style in the most astonishing way. Instead of living as individuals each looking after the self, they shared everything in common. They cared for each other as they were one family. They were happy to bear one another's burdens. Women served the community in different ways as evangelists, teachers, deacons, and in all other ways their talents enabled them to serve. There is no male or female in the services of our Lord. Our God is the Mighty God. Mary, who has brought down the mighty from the thrones and lifted up the lowly. God is the greatest reconciler and the leveler of mountains and valleys. Women too can play vital roles in creating a just society. It is possible under the leadership of Diocesan Women's fellowship to undertake specific programmes such as preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, struggling to uphold the dignity and value of women, fighting against dowry system, untouchability and alcoholism, spreading health education among rural people, caring socially rejected women and children, promoting family welfare schemes providing marriage counselling, forming Mahila Samajams and co-operatives to take advantage of Government Welfare schemes, running cottage industries for unemployed women etc.

We may recall that Emmaus was where two of the disciples went to forget Jesus in His great failure. But there Jesus fed them with hope as He blessed the bread they shared. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb with other women to further anoint the dead body of Jesus which was the symbol of the utter failure of His mission. But behold the risen Lord changed her to be the first East Herald. If we do not know Christ is risen, that he feeds us with word and sacraments, that He walks with us daily and even meets us in the midst of the poor and outcast people of the world, then we need a place of retreat, a retreat where we can forget a fallen world, where Christ has failed, sin abounds and satan rules. But suppose Christ is risen indeed! then He may meet us in the dusty roads of Emmaus or while weeping in desperation near hopeless tombs.

He may send us with a new commission to engage the world's struggles in His name and to extend the victory of His resurrection. He may call us to claim or reclaim unsafe city streets, outcast villages, polluted streams and air, eroded lands, idle minds, hopeless heart and empty lives as places where He rules.

—Excerpt



# Women: Co-workers with God\*—At Home

MRS. DAISY GOPAL RATNAM, Madras

'Women co-workers with God'—why did they choose it, I pondered. There is no such word as co-worker in the Oxford English Dictionary. I looked at the word 'worker'. It says worker means doer, performer, agent or servant. If we extend the word it means servant, we can call ourselves servants of the Servant Lord. I concluded that it is our frustration the Women's Fellowship has chose the word, because the men would not take them as their equals in work or as co-workers. The Psalmist has said 'Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will never forsake me'. Do they genuinely want to be co-workers with God. If so what do they mean? If that is so, what are the qualities they want to emulate of God? The common understanding of God, perhaps if we put it in the form of questions will make it clear.

Who is the author of all creations — God

Who bears all our misgivings — God

Who runs the show in all the world — God

Who cares for his creation

Who loves us. Who forgives all our frailties and faults.

Who upholds us when we are beyond the pale of all human law — God

Yes, a woman is capable of some of the qualities of God in spite of her so-called weakness or inabilities heaped on her by her so-called protectors, lords, masters, loved ones, neighbours etc. PARTNERS WITH GOD, may be the right way to express ourselves.

How can you be partners with God or co-workers with God in your homes, in your society and in your church. You have divided the theme into 3 compartments. Are there 3 sealed compartments. They are so inter-related, inter-twined, inter-dependent, and inter-causative, that it is important to deal with them as separate subjects. One depends so much on the other. What you are at home is reflected in society and what is in society or community is reflected in your home and these two are reflected in your church. Home, society and Church and religious and social practices have to be viewed as part of the nation and country. Church is no island and religion is no island and you are not an island. We are, what we are, because of our traditions, culture, habits, thinking and actions. So it is good to look at our history and background to understand in what place or position or status we are in our country and society, where our houses and churches are placed.

The social processes in our country are very complex. For a very long time after Vedic ages, the very nature of Indian Society was based upon a pattern of economic and

social inequalities. Inequalities are built in our traditional social structure and these inequalities are based on caste, community, class and gender, with socially accepted right and expected roles of women.

Ours is a feudal society. It is a sexist society. From early age, woman has been conditioned to a subservient, sub-ordinate role. A woman's status is always a derived one instead of being a primary one. In other words, instead of being a person in her own rights, she will be 'the daughter of', 'wife of', 'mother of', 'daughter-in-law of', or 'sister of' a man. Even to this day some of us, (apart from men) introduce ourselves like that.

From 1500 B.C. to 1900 A.D., for a period of 3400 years, in spite of the unrivalled culture and high ideals of society that the Vedic Ages gave the country, the position and status of women declined. From being man's co-equal and co-worker and co-sharer and half-mate, she became his subordinate, a mere chattel to be used at will for satisfying his wants, with no rights or will of her own.

By the middle of the 19th century, there grew up an immense upsurge of feeling, an awareness of elementary human rights, and a quickening of conscience of all thinking men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Pandit Ishwarchand Vidyasagar and our Christian missionaries. All these folks stood for the rights of the casteless, who had no bargaining power, and for the rights of women and children. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was responsible for the abolition of 'Sati' and Pandit Vidyasagar for the Hindu Remarriage Act of 1896. It was then, that a long awaited chapter in the history of India's new womanhood began.

With the arrival of Gandhiji on India's political scene a new era of liberation and emancipation of women began. He spoke fearlessly against the wrong done to women in the name of law, tradition and religion. He launched a crusade against enforced widowhood, purdah, dedication of girls to temples, prostitution, early marriage, the dowry system, the economic bondage and the material slavery of women. He wrote with his masterly pen and spoke from every platform on the emancipation of women. Women joined him in the independence struggle and the women's movement began with the political struggle. It was at this time Sarojini Naidu made that famous statement, 'there is no power in this world that can set any limitation to women's achievement, except women herself'. Slowly the status of women changed and rose up and in 1971 Dec. 18, when Mr. Montague, Secretary of State for India arrived in Madras, a women's delegation met him and demanded that 'Women be recognised as people and not disqualified because of sex and be given franchise', (i.e. right to vote) and this was granted.

With the achievement of independence in 1947, constitutional quality was conferred on women. The appalling

\* First Address delivered at the Quadrennial Conference of the C.S.I. Women's Fellowship, held at Tiruchirappalli from 24-27, May, 1984.

tragedy of the literacy of Indian womenhood to this present day is illiteracy. According to the 1975 census, the urban women's literacy rate is 42.3% and that of the rural women is 13.2%.

The one single instrument that changed the status and destiny of women in India is education. This golden factor was started, encouraged, pursued with diligence at great odds, by our missionaries of old. Their good relationship with the British Government was an advantageous factor on this development. In the middle of the 19th century, the various Missionary Societies and particularly The Church Missionary Society (CMS), the London Missionary Society (LM now CMW) and the Scottish Church (SCS) were the pioneers in the field of education. By 1851, the undivided Madras presidency alone, there were 217 Secondary Schools. Truly these missionaries were the forerunners of women's movement and liberation in our country. The same can be told of boys schools and colleges etc. Both Christians and non-christians used these schools alike. As a community we Christians definitely had a good start to begin with.

Have we used this advantage in the handicapped race for women, effectively? The adult literacy of olden days started by the Mahatmas has no relevance now. It is functional literacy that alone can create an impact and will talk about it at a later appropriate time.

What are we going to do in our homes?

Our attitudes need to change first. The attitude of parents on the birth of boys and girls is distinctly different. Distribution of sweets takes place on the birth of boys. Agony is at the birth of girls and sorrow is expressed about their future, education, dowry and marriage. Boys are considered an investment for their old age.

We have to be careful about words talked in the home, and relearn to revise them. We say, girls should shut up, while boys can be arrogant. Boys should sleep on the cots and girls on mats. When there is little food, boys get it, while girls can starve. What has this resulted in? You create an inferiority complex in girls. Training of boys and girls, should be looked into from the very beginning

we buy dolls for girls and buy cars and trucks for the boys. Why do we do this. By every word, every action, you build up chauvinistic attitude in boys and build in, inferiority complex in girls.

Look into the attitudes between husband and wife. We find authority of the husband and total submissiveness by wife in our homes.

We should start creating new attitudes and start the process of discussing and deciding any action in our homes along with the children — Do not take inhuman treatment lying down, meekly. *I Do Not Advocate Rebellion or Revolt Against Men.* But I do Solemnly and Sincerely Advocate a Movement of Calm Assertion. Tennyson said, I do not advocate 'Self-knowledge, self-control self-reverence — these 3 alone lead life to sovereign power' How can you do it? Build your inner strength, Prayer alone can give you that power. Fast and pray. Pray with friends pray with husband and children. If that is not possible pray alone.

Learn to know what is happening around you in your society — the improvements — the new bills and the laws covering women's rights, knowledge is Power. Read the daily papers and your favourite magazines. Knowledge will lead to awareness. Awareness leads to decision and decision to certain courses of action. These will help you to be individual and you can claim your rights.

Women be united, create solidarity in your neighbourhood. You can conduct seminars, study groups about your problems, to fight against gender injustice. If we dream alone, our dreams are likely to remain dreams, but if we dream together, we can alter reality says Don Helde Camara.

Try to be economically independent. Even after marriage study further, and develop new skills to earn. Training for employment will make equality nearer.

Liberate men from their loneliness, and from fear from their chauvinistic attitudes. They need our help much. Emancipation of men from their wrong attitudes is the first and just step towards emancipation of women.

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# The Challenge before Church Women

MRS. ARUNA GNANADASON,\* Madras



It gives me great pleasure to bring to you greetings from the All-India Council of Christian Women and from the National Council of Churches in India. I feel privileged that you have invited me to share with you in your joy at this Quadrennial conference of the C.S.I. women's fellowship. Each time I meet with church women and learn of their earnest commitment, I feel excited and my hope for the future of the church and the world is strengthened. Because I believe that Christian women as followers of the liberator God have a crucial role to play in changing the world in which we live and in bringing renewal to our churches.

Recently I was reflecting on the familiar Easter story (St. John 20 : 11-18) and some insights flashed across my mind which I will share with you. Easter is a symbol of hope — a challenge to live through the turbulent times we live in. It is also a challenge to act — not to passively live through each day. It is interesting to particularly note the important role that women played in the last days of Christ and in the Resurrection event. Women did not betray Christ or deny him or run away from him — they stayed by his side till the very end and it was to Mary Magdalene that Christ first revealed himself on His resurrection. Even the Gospel writers, who often glanced over the presence of women when recording the life and witness of Christ, could not ignore the active presence of women in the last days and resurrection of Christ. It is also important to note that Paul in his record of resurrection witnesses (1 Cor. 15 : 3-7) fails to mention a single woman. Somewhere along the way women get forgotten.

From the St. John passage, I wish to highlight two phrases :

1. *Woman, why are you weeping?* (v. 15a) Last year in Vancouver, Canada during the VI Assembly of the World Council of Churches, one of the special programmes was a programme called 'The Well'. This was a space for women, organised on issues women in various parts of the world are grappling with. One of the major events at The Well was a session called, 'Woman, why are you weeping — a forum on violence against women.' Four of us spoke at this meeting of the violence perpetrated on women in our own countries — Canada, India, Palestine and Korea. After which an American woman theologian reminded us of the first Easter morning and concluded with

these extremely powerful and comforting words, 'Woman God knows why you weep, and (she) weeps with you.'

2. *Go . . . and say to them . . .* (17b). The second important message we get from the Easter story is Jesus' commissioning of women to 'go . . . and say to them . . .' It is Mary's responsibility not to 'possess for herself' the good news. She is not to keep it for herself — for her own salvation — but is to share it with the world. We too are called today — not to keep this liberating message, but to share ourselves for others, especially for all the women for whom God weeps.

We have been hearing of the many atrocities heaped on women, we have also been given in very strong terms the Biblical mandate for our call to be co-workers with God. So our task is clearly set before us — to work for all the women in this land who weep and for whom God weeps.

I would now go on to speak of what specifically we as the CSI Women's Fellowship can do. The women's fellowship of the CSI, as is the women's auxiliary of most of the major denominations in India, is a strong active organization. All the major women's auxiliaries have their own constitutions, big budgets, projects and very often support various ministries of the Church. The commendable work done by women throughout church history can never be underestimated — even if our church historians have systematically left it unrecorded.

## Working towards true partnership

However I perceive an unfortunate trend. The women's auxiliaries of the churches have become powerful political identities running parallel to the church. They have not had a pervading influence on the life, theology, doctrine, liturgy and practices of the church. For example an issue such as the ordination of women, which so intimately affects women, is voted on by a 95% male church council or synod, while the women's fellowship does not even seriously discuss the issue, let alone have a say in the decision the church takes. I hasten to add here that I do not imply that the question of ordination is a 'women's issue' — it is not so, it is an issue connected with the total ministry of the church but women are the ones affected by a decision the church takes. There are many issues on which women should have a say, and we don't because our work is not integrated into the life of the church and we have little power in decision-making processes.

\* Mrs. Aruna Gnanadason is the Executive Secretary of the All India Council of Christian women, a sub-unit of the N.C.C.I.

This arrangement of giving women autonomy and keeping them in their own little corner is convenient for the church. Women too, who find that the women's fellowship is the only place where they enjoy power, prefer to keep it this way. But unfortunately, this means that women have little say in major decisions that the church makes. We have to move out of our corner, break out of our traditional patterns of functioning and work for the renewal of the church. While autonomy is essential so as to build up women leadership, exclusiveness is not conducive to the attainment of the community of God. The church in turn must recognise that it has wantonly allowed women's organisations to drift away so that it can avoid facing up to the fact women must and can play an effective partnership role.

### What can we do ?

I see various specific ways in which Christian women can contribute to the life of church and society.

(a) *Women as bearers of new life* : Women have for all times been associated with the womb and child birth. Motherhood has been glorified and idealised and a woman is considered to be incomplete if she has not borne a child. There is nothing wrong in being a mother—I am myself the proud mother of two sons. However, it is a fact, that this special gift that God have given to women, is used to confine women to the four walls of their homes, and denies them many opportunities in life.

But here, I am speaking of women as being bearers of new life, as creators of new life where life is threatened. Sarah laughed when she was told that she is to bear a child in her old age — this was because she did not believe in life or in God's power to restore life. In the Bible, we also see many women who resist forces of evil so as to protect life. For example we see the midwives in the Exodus story (Ex. 1 : 15-21) disobeying the powerful pharaoh, risking their own lives so as to do God's will and protect the Israelite babies. They say an open blatant lie (v. 19) rather than disobey the God whom they feared. They were saying 'yes' to life and 'no' to power. This is to me an example of a very feminine way of resistance. This moral strength in women for civil disobedience and satyagraha is what Gandhiji used in his freedom struggle.

Now, what do we do when we see forces of death in operation around us? I have heard a Christian woman once say, 'I am so happy I do not recognise problems around me.' Do we also say this? Everyday our newspapers report dowry deaths and other violences against women. Recently three Christian tribal women were raped by policemen in Bihar. One of them could not stand the indignity on her person and committed suicide . . . . I could go on giving examples. The question is, do we have the courage of those midwives to act fearlessly instead of fearing the powers that be. Have we not misunderstood what submission to authority really means?

(b) *Women as peacemakers* : Out of our own life experience as women as know that endangered human relationships between partners or between children can be healed if one of the two dares to take the first step towards peace. Women as creators of life also see themselves as protectors of life. Innumerable examples can be given of this. In Greenham Common in England, we see women silently resisting the weapons of death. In Madurai, ten

thousand rural women assemble on March 8 (International Women's Day) to express their anguish over rising price unequal wages and violence against women. In German women silently march, praying for peace. In Madras representatives of the women of the nine Lutheran Church in India meet and decide that through prayer and fastin and action they will try to restore peace in their churche which like many churches in India are facing litigation and other forms of strife. These are just a few example But they all express one important factor — women ha the power to be peacemakers.

(c) *Women as the voice of the voiceless* : Our main concern is with the marginalised groups in church and society who struggle under an imposed silence. Their voices are never heard. Women, who are also a marginalised group in society, must speak up on behalf of others who are oppressed too. In the quest for a just and equitable society, many things have to be changed. For example we see in operation unjust laws that are in need of amendments. We as women can mobilise public opinion so to accelerate changes. We can be a voice in various ways —through prayerful silent demonstrations and dharna through writing letters to authorities, through signature campaigns, etc.

(d) *Women's fellowships as sanctuaries for women in distress* : I was deeply troubled when once a women fellowship group told me that the fellowship is the last place they would go to when they have a problem as they are not sure that the news about their problem will remain within the group and they also fear that other women will be judgemental on them rather than giving them support. This basic distrust that we have of each other must be overcome. The women's fellowship must offer sensitivity support to women who are troubled.

In our churches or in community in which we are placed we see women who are being battered or are being mentally tortured in their families. They may need temporary refuge or rehabilitation, counselling or even legal help. We must be willing to give of our time and our resources to help such women. I am reminded of Mary the young woman who was visited by an angel and told that she is to bear a child, though yet a virgin. The Bible does not tell us of what emotions Mary must have had when she was given this astounding piece of news but St. Luke (1 : 39-40) does tell us that Mary made haste and went to Elizabeth, who's moral support she needed and she stayed with Elizabeth for three months. We as women need each other and we must be always ready to give of ourselves to other women in trouble.

(e) *Women as nurturers of new life styles* : We will have to be brave enough to accept changes that are occurring all around us and learn to adjust to new situations. We will have to analyse what 'servanthood' really means. What do we understand by the word 'authority'? In our women's fellowship we will have to experiment with new forms of co-operative leadership, rather than just following the male authoritarian models of operation as we are doing now. Hierarchical structures are impediments to creative work as we get so engrossed in elections, power struggles and loyalty to individuals that we forget the main task for which we have been called. We need to realise our common strength to be women who's only purpose is to say 'yes' to life and not be concerned about personal political power. We must also be willing to take an interest in church matters and question its unjust practices whoever be the victims in such situations.

(f) *Women as ensurers of a true community in God* : It is our responsibility to ensure that the church is so transformed that it reflects a true community of God. We have to see that the dignity and value of every man, woman and child is safeguarded both in the home, in the church and in the society. We will have to overcome structures that are impediments to the realisation of a true community. Too often the church depends on its own understanding of the will of God and places overriding importance on traditionally accepted patterns of authority. The book of Numbers (27 : 1-7) records an interesting episode which describes how the 5 daughters of Zelophehad appear before Moses and the other leaders of Israel to challenge the existing law that denies them a share in their father's property. What is of importance to us here is verses 5 and 6 which say that Moses brought their case before the Lord who decrees in uncompromising terms that the women are right. Moses did not decide on this case himself — nor did he depend on the tradition thus far followed — he sought God's guidance. How often do our church leaders do this? I wonder. The church must more often take to the Lord matters that affect women and other oppressed groups rather than taking unequivocal decisions. I have heard of a church leader, a theologian, declaring in the church council, 'The matter of women's ordination is no more to be discussed because it is against the will of God'. Recently in a church where women commonly collect offertory on a Sunday service, some of the elders took objection to it. The pastor announced from the altar, 'From henceforth women shall not collect offertory.' He did not give a chance to the women to question why they had been denied this right — nor did he deem it necessary to explain to them why this decision had been taken. Certainly he didn't take the matter to the Lord !

So often we see that it is cultural factors and the social environment that determines what happens in the church than sound theological arguments. This morning, we witnessed a woman ordained Minister celebrate the Holy Communion. To me it was a first experience and I am sure it was to most of us present there. After the service, out of curiosity, I moved among the women and talked to a cross-section of them as to what they felt about this experience. The majority of the women were overjoyed by the whole experience and expressed this to me in various ways. However, there was one woman whom the experience came as a great shock. She was angry that a woman, 'an unholly person' had entered the altar. She was so disturbed that she did not receive communion and had sat in the church and wept — she knew not why. To another woman it was acceptable, but she hoped that the woman pastor will not celebrate holy communion when she has her menstrual period! These feelings express what many women feel, though I have discovered in my work with women that the majority of women are for ordination. So we see that often it is cultural pressures that inhibit women and not what God wants for the church and the world.

(g) *Women in solidarity* : Nothing can be done unless there is unity among us. We have to come together overcoming all differences, learn to accept each other and work closely with each other to bring about change. Too often we are divided by groupism, caste, community, denomination etc. This will serve no purpose. And we must also recognise that as Christian women there is little that we can do by ourselves. We will have to align ourselves with the secular women's movement and work with them to bring about change in the status of women. There now

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(Contd. on p. 22)

# THE QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCE

24th to 27th May at Tiruchirappalli

MISS SUGUNA DEVASUNDARAM, General Secretary, C.S.I. W.F.

C.S.I. Women's Fellowship thanks every individual for their sincere prayers to the above conference. 289 delegates from all the dioceses of C.S.I. : except Sri Lanka were represented to glorify God in the deep fellowship of one another. Mrs. B. Suvarna from Krishna-Godavari says, 'I belong to C.S.I. from childhood and now when meet and enjoy the fellowship of sisters throughout the four states of S.India my heart overflows with happiness and thrill.' We thank and praise God for His Grace with us throughout.

Our gratitude is inexpressible to Mrs. Clara Clarke, the convener for her spiritual insight and efficiency ; The Most Rev. I. Jesudasan, C.S.I. Moderator for his presence and to his uplifting inaugural address ; Mrs. and Rt. Rev. Dr. Paulraj and their team of presbyters and women leaders for their excellent arrangements ; Rev. M. Azariah, C.S.I. general secretary for full participation and messages ; for all speakers who in one accord televised W. F. lack of involvement in the real issues of women ; Mrs. Christina Solomon Doraiswamy and Sr. Jane Moses who declared open the sale and exhibition respectively. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Krupaveni Prakash Rao, the president ; Mrs. Gladys Inbanathan, the vice-president ; Sr. Joyce Woollard the treasurer who planned the conference so well. Oneness in spirit and work was the gratification of it.

For the first time in the history of C.S.I., a woman presbyter was to celebrate the Eucharist on 25th May '84 at 6-30 a.m. Since it is still delicate subject in some of the dioceses though ordination was accepted by the synod, anything to the extent of walk out was expected at the service. Sure, there were loud rumours of it. But the Holy Spirit took them all in. The service which was assisted by two lady deacons and two men presbyters was a blessing to all. Tears of joy ran down the cheeks of Sr. Jane Moses, the former general secretary to see in her life time what she and others worked for countless years.

The messages were so touching that Mrs. Ammani Joel, from Kanyakumari diocese writes, 'We must raise our voice as W.F. against atrocities like caping against women.' She also says, 'Women are half of the congregation or more. Self-centred politics have crippled our churches. Women by our voting rights can bring reformation in the church. So why not we pass a resolution in this conference (1) We will not join any parties in our diocese. (2) By our voting rights, we will throw out all self-centred people and elect Christ centred and those who are really interested in the church.'

Mrs. S. Aseervadam, Krishna-Godavari diocese comes out to say, 'I was inspired by all the speeches given by various dignitaries till now. Its not merely inspiration but it provoked me to work for my fellow women who are in depressed stage and in real need.' It is our prayer and hope that they will be carried through on reaching their destinations.

On the weaker side there are few to point out. Sale, exhibition, public meeting with tea, skit on women's issues, group discussions, excursion, demonstration of village woman's classes were included in the programme to facilitate delegates to move about and share with one another. In spite of all this the messages took the major part of the time so Miss Masilamoney of Coimbatore diocese points out,

' Except after supper we were glued to our seats and became passive listeners.'

At times self-centredness gets on and doesn't allow place or time for others. Hence adjustments become difficult. The stage holds only few and others get hurt. Time for individual meditation, reflection were also not available.

For future implementation the following suggestions were discussed and brought up from the groups :

1. From women theologically trained as interested in studies —

(a) RESOLVED to request the dioceses in the C.S.I. to permit the schools and colleges to appoint full time chaplains.

(b) To request the dioceses to revise the religious instructions in the colleges and schools and to prepare the syllabus and to permit and encourage teachers to take up theological regaining with leave and salary.

(c) To request the diocese to ordain all the theologically trained women as early as possible and to appoint them as full time workers.

(2) From diocesan and branches' office-bearers —

(a) Apart from constitutional changes it was suggested that pastors' wives to be given training.

(b) To start a cell to study the personal laws of Christians and codify them to meet the various difficulties faced by the community regarding marriage, divorce, succession to property etc.

Women should agitate for re-codification of the personal laws of Christians.

(3) Women interested in rural work had separate discussions.

*From general discussions the following came up :*

1. Customs or traditions such as (a) auspicious and inauspicious day for any function, (b) horoscope observation for marriage, (c) caste system, (d) Dowry system, (e) wrong attitudes concerning people should be opposed.

2. *It is suggested to include in the future programmes of W.F. —*

(a) A marriage Bureau attach Diocese (b) Self-employment programmes, (c) Non-formal Education (d) Programmes for the handicapped.

*At the business meeting, the need for multipurpose building for women's Fellowship was thought of, to work among the downtrodden effectively through informal education and income generating projects.*

All the above proposals will come before the C.S.I. W.F. central committee when it meets next.

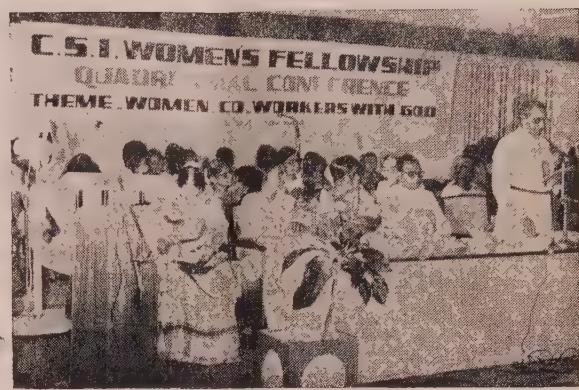
It was unanimously agreed to have 7th Quadrennial conference in 1988 at Masilipatnam in Krishna-Godavari Diocese.

The participants have scattered all over S. India. They are full of enthusiasm and all the resolutions are fresh to make them restless for action. But when they look around they are alone, situations are not welcoming, problems are too deep to put a finger. At this point only your continuous continuous prayers will give the power to lounge in to the deep. The women is ready with the net. Questions - where to throw, how to throw are frightening her. Will you uphold her ?

# Glimpses of the Sixth Quadrennial Conference



It all began with a long procession . . . .



Moderator, giving the Inaugural Address



Mrs. Clara Clarke, the Convener of the conference, welcoming the members and the speakers



Mrs. Krupaveni Prakasa Rao, the President of the C. S. I. Women Fellowship, introducing the theme



Mrs. Daisy Gopal Ratnam was the main speaker



The Rev. Florence Deenadayalan was the celebrant of the Holy Communion - a historical event

# Women: Co-Communicators with God

REV. DASS BABU, Director, C.S.I. Communications

## Introduction

### A. What is communication ?

The word communication is derived from the Latin Word 'Communis', which means, to make common to share, to impart and to transmit. It denotes a process that is both interactive and purposeful. In a broad way the purpose of communication has been held to be three fold ; to inform, to persuade and to entertain. It is recognised that the basic purpose of communication is to affect others. We communicate in order to influence people.

### B. What is Christian Communication ?

There is a keen difference between communication in general and Christian communication. Christian communication is goal-oriented communication. When gospel is communicated it calls for an action. Some argue that evangelism is uncalled for in a pluralistic world, in which many religions compete for man's or woman's loyalty. While this does sound quite tolerant it completely violates the mandate of scripture, 'to go and make disciples in all nations (Matt. 28 : 18-20). The church is to be salt and light in the world (Matt. 5 : 11-13) and always' ... prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have (1 Pet. 3 : 15 NIV). The Christian message finds its source in the scripture and it is the only message of any form of communication to the modern world. Message could be adapted to audience without sacrificing the biblical truth.

God is the greatest communicator. He communicated his love and concern for this world through his son, Jesus Christ. Who was the one who presented Jesus to the people ? It was a woman—Virgin Mary—co-communicator with God. Who was the person who said, '...is he not Christ ?' It was woman again—the Samaritan woman. Of course, a man called Peter also said the same thing—You are the Christ. But surprisingly enough Jesus admonished Peter saying—don't communicate this to anyone. On the other hand, he allowed the woman to communicate to the villagers. What was the result ? Jn. 4th Chapter 'many believed in him'. Long before, the man called Peter preached his spell bound sermon in the streets of Jerusalem, a woman, that too an immoral and untouchable, brought several hundred people to Jesus. Was she not a co-communicator with God ? If men are good communicators women are better communicators !

The basis for Christian community is the divine call. God made us his people by calling us out of slavery to freedom, 'out of captivity to liberation', out of 'sin to salvation'. By our common call we recognize each other and by our constant interaction, we communicate with each other. But this doesn't mean that we are a closed circle of people embracing each other who belong to the same community. We are a forward moving group of companions with a commission to communicate the Gospel to the world. We are called to share with others what we have received from God. We share Gospel with our neighbours—the Gospel is nothing but the life of Jesus

Christ. In other words we share Jesus Christ with others. We share his redeeming power and his power to liberate the people—men and women, who are struggling in various sphere of life. We share his power of forgiveness and reconciliation, thereby we affirm our faith in Jesus Christ.

### Why to communicate ?

Traditionally women's occupational status has always been associated with the home and the family—the onerous task of bearing and rearing children. The ideal picture of woman was one of an uncomplaining wife serving her husband and his family and sacrificing herself for them. Interestingly enough, Neethi sastram (the moral code in Sanskrit) describing how a perfect woman should be says this :

Karyeshu dasee, Karaneshu manthree  
Rupecha Laxmi, Kshamaya dharithree  
Bhojyeshu maathaa, Shayanethu Veshya

(Woman should work like servant, counsel like minister, look like Lakshmi, tolerant like earth, feed like mother and satisfy like prostitute). What a wish ! Whether they are urban or rural, educated or uneducated, working or not, this has been the status of women in India from time immemorial. Their fight for emancipation freedom and justice is like a cry for the moon. The women's liberation Movement or the International Year of the Women or any other Lib-moves to expose the male chauvinists and secure equal status are ending up as news stories for the media.

The last decade has witnessed an intensification of the movement for women's liberation but this movement was and is still confined to the elite sections of the urban society. If there were to be any study or programme about the problems of women they are referred to the urban educated and employed women. No doubt what the urban women folk are demanding are just and need immediate action, but out of the total population of 340 millions (women) only 65 million are the urban women and this segment, however powerful and vocal it is, can hardly be regarded as the representative of the women of India. On the contrary, the majority of 275 million rural women folk quietly bears the burden and remain as the silent suffering lot. I personally feel it is high time for all the educated working women of this great fellowship to apply leave for a few days and go to villages, stay with them and educate them. Each woman should teach one woman in a year. Each diocese can adopt a village and educate them collectively. Let us not forget that the welfare of women would mean the welfare of society. Church need to develop new perceptions and concepts in its programmes and impart education to women in order to bring them closer to the realities of the day. Remember if woman is educated whole family is educated. With the growth of communication and opening up new employment opportunities and the emergence of egalitarian ethos, the climate in India is ripe for a change and if church determines to speed up the process, Indian woman will move steadily toward more equal status with man.

Today if we evaluate our programmes and our efforts to communicate, we have to confess that often our communication is dull and unimaginative, uninteresting and ineffectual. There is no dearth of evangelistic activity in our country. Perhaps today we have the largest missionary force in service. Dozens of daily Radio programmes, revival meetings, scores of evangelistic campaigns are all in full swing, but God's great commission to communicate the Gospel is somehow not being carried out with the same zeal and sincerely as it ought to be. The great commission has become a great commotion. It seems apparent that, with all the media made available, Church has not made any dent in the life as it did in the first century and the historic mandate of the church to proclaim and exemplify the kingdom of God still remains.

### How to communicate ?

Let us look out the different aspects of the subject. Six questions will show the areas to be explored as explained by Denis Saunders. Who ? Says What ? With what purpose ? To whom ? In what situation ? By what means ? With what effect ?

#### Who ?

In your role as communicator you must know what you are talking about. Your audience must believe in you.

#### What ?

Define the contents of your message—the information or attitudes that are to be communicated. (needs of the community) Purpose : Be clear about the response you want the audience to make. What do you expect them to do ?

#### Whom ?

A person's background affects how he learns, so you need to know something of your audience's previous experience, learning abilities, interests, attitudes and values. Do not assume that you know all these things. Be ready to listen and learn.

#### What situation ?

The physical situation affects many aspects of learning. In whose territory the communication is going on ? What knowledge you have about the place and surrounding ?

#### What means ?

For many centuries the main means of communicating ideas has been the spoken word, with song and drama added on special occasions. People in some parts of the world have relied more on the written word—print media and their means of communication have developed differently.

The situation today, however, is changing rapidly almost everywhere and in most countries there is becoming available a wide range of communication tools. Radio

T.V., Sattelites, Cassettes, Video Cassettes etc. A word about the means or tools :

- (a) Audio—Something heard—spoken word.
- (b) Visuals—something seen—Visuals arouse interest, provide a clear mental picture, speedy understanding.
- (c) Multi-sensory Materials—People receive experiences through all five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. If you can appeal to more than one sense at a time your message is more likely to be understood and accepted.

If I hear I forget  
If I see I remember  
If I do I know

Your remember 10% of what you hear you remember 50% of what you hear and see you remember 90% of what you hear, see and do.

Select tools and methods which make the subject to be communicated most clear to the audience and which do it most interestingly and most economically of time, space and money.

#### What effect ?

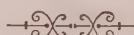
As you communicate note the effect on individuals in your audience. Their reactions, expressions, actions and words tell you whether they are interested or bored, clear or confused. If the message is distorted, you must discover the reasons and be ready to change your approach, language and teaching materials and methods.

#### Conclusion

Custom still governs the destinies of Indian women. Society is usually slow to shake off its established customs even if they are irrational. Centuries old customs seem hard to break, yet the Indian women both in rural and urban areas are receptive to ideas of change. Women who are in cities have proved their worth, reaching the top of the ladder in various fields of activity. They are highly sensitive and intelligent but the number of women to whom the portals of education, training and opportunity to exercise their professional skills are open unfortunately continues to be small. Apathy on the part of educated women to help their less fortunate sisters and an easy going attitude on their part has allowed outmoded customs to continue despite enlightened legislation.

The need of the day is to give the much needed attention to villages. This can perhaps best be done through a motivated and enlightened local communicators. What seems to be required now is an intensive effort on the part of educated women themselves to undertake action against practices like dowry, bride-burning, rape and customs inimical to women. The time is ripe for a vigorous movement to change the attitudes of men and women themselves concerning their role.

The general principle emerging from decades of communications research is that the mass media generally do not play a decisive role in any type of major decision. Publishers and broadcasters, by and large, are para-church organisations with only an indirect relationship to the local church. Face-to-face communication on the other hand, is generally more closely related to the local church.



## 'Our Bread for Tomorrow'

### Give us Today'

DR. C. DURAISINGH\*

I have often wondered at the possible consequences for our prayer and living if we start saying, 'Give us this day, the bread for tomorrow', instead of the present, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' in the Lord's Prayer. It is highly likely that many groups of early Christians did use the Aramaic *mahar* in the Lord's Prayer, meaning 'tomorrow'. Quoting St. Jerome, Jeremias, a modern scholar, states 'the Aramaic speaking Jewish-Christians, among whom the Lord's Prayer lived on its original Aramaic working in unbroken usage since the days of Jesus, prayed, "Our bread for tomorrow, give us today." I am not at all suggesting that our private and corporate use of the petition must be altered. But I do want to call our attention to the potential insights which could be brought out by such a rendering. Let me share my random reflections on some of these possibilities. My hope and prayer is that for some of you too, this prayer our Lord taught would become revolutionary and life-altering.

When I learn to pray, 'Our bread for tomorrow, give us this day', I am led to confess that the bread that I am given today has an intrinsic relation to the bread of the great *Tomorrow*, the term 'tomorrow' being an expression for God's coming New Age. Whatever I am given today is only a token and a portion of the bread of the great banquet of salvation that God has promised for all people. It is a *foretaste* of that bread which all of God's children from the East and the West, South and North sitting at the table of the Lord will share and be satisfied. Therefore, my prayer is that God gives me, today and every day, my portion of God's bread of salvation as my advance participation. The *Idli* that I eat or the bread that I break thus becomes a concrete token of God's promise of wholeness to all humans and cosmos.

At the same time in praying for tomorrow's bread today, here and now, in the present, there is a clear recognition that unless our hope in God's bread for tomorrow is related to the struggle of the immediate present, it has no meaning. It calls for a manifestation of God's future is in the midst of the present. Hence, there is no escape into a meaningless hope whose power and guarantee cannot be experienced in the present. The One who prays this prayer cannot be rest content with a contentless hope, the 'pie in the sky', as it were.

When such an understanding of the *double-relationship* of the present,—on the one hand to the fullness of God and God's promised future and on the other to the concreteness of the present—take hold of me, its implications for my living and praying are many indeed.

First, such praying expresses that Christian life is fundamentally one which is lived in terms of God's promise and

our anticipation of its fulfilment in the present. The structure of Christian existence is fundamentally one of 'promise and expectancy', of divine promise and human expectant response. But how often I turn God's promise into workable, testable formula in the immediate present! Instead of trusting in God's promises, I am tempted to turn them into predictable and usable solutions. Hence my prayers become so calculated, venal and even mercenary. God is thus looked upon as a quick problem solving machine. Such a kind of praying is radically put into question when I pray 'Give us this day, the bread of the morrow.'

Secondly, if my living and praying in the present arise out of my hope in the promised New Age of God, then my priorities are ordered christianly. If every one of my daily act in the present is an expectant (proleptic) act of bringing into *concretion* God's promise of ultimate wholeness for all, then alone all my longings, thinking, willing and doing can be set within their proper *messianic* perspective. Only then my petition for my bread today and my prayer 'Thy Kingdom come' can be integrally related. As I read the Gospels, I find that it is a vision of the integral relation between the breaking of bread every day and the ultimate divine promise for humanity that provides Jesus the frame work, the overarching perspective, for setting his priorities muddled up, because I tend to reduce everything into my immediate needs and collapse the past and the future into a convenient present.

If my present bread is an advance portion of the promised wholeness for all in the New Age, then *there can be no radical discontinuity between the present and the future*, the secular and the sacred, and by implication between the Church and the world. Since my present is not simply a product or *extrapolation* of the past, I am freed from a sense of oppressive guilt and shame. Since my future is not totally discontinuous from my present, I am saved from paralysing anxiety. Since my present is constituted by the here and now (proleptic) presence of the future of the promising God, it is not left meaningless. In other words, by praying 'Give us this day the bread for tomorrow' I am preserved from a sense of *fragmentariness* that characterizes much of modern human existence.

Moreover, through such a praying experience I discover that there is an intrinsic and unbroken relation between Jesus' table fellowship with sinners and publicans, his last eucharistic meal with his disciples and his promised table fellowship in the fullness of the kingdom of God. If all these *three moments* of breaking bread are intrinsically connected to each other, their implications for the life and mission of the Church are many. There can be no eucharistic breaking of the bread without our breaking bread with the needy and the oppressed in the present.

\* Dr. C. Duraisingh is the Assistant professor of Theology and Ethics at the United Theological College, Bangalore.

# THE C.S.I. WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

*May 24th-27th 1984*

'Charm can be deceptive and beauty doesn't last, but a woman who fears and reverences God shall be greatly praised. Praise her for the many fine things she does, these deeds of hers shall bring her honour and recognition even from the leaders of the nations.' So it is written in the Book of the Proverbs of Solomon. And surely Solomon would have found much to commend in the ladies of the Sixth Quadrennial Conference of the Women's Fellowship held in the beautiful campus of the Bishop Heber College, Trichy from May 24th to 27th 1984.

Delegates begin arriving as early as the morning of May 23rd. All the 21 Dioceses of Church of South India were represented and a total of 300 delegates including the Central and Regional Officers, took part in the Conference. These all lined up with their banners proudly displayed and walked in procession from the entrance to the campus along the way to the auditorium of the college, defying the heat of the day, and singing as they went.

Once in the auditorium the special guests were welcomed by the Convener Mrs. Clara Clark, and Mrs. Shanthi Paulraj, President of Trichy-Thanjavur Women's Fellowship. After a hymn of praise, the Conference first stood to remember those of their members who had gone to be with the Lord since the last time that they had met together. The theme of the Conference was 'Women Co-Workers with God' and this was based on the Bible passage, I Cor. 3 : 10 which was read by the W. F. President Mrs. Krupa Veni Prakash Rao.

It was with much joy that the Moderator of the Church of South India the Most Rev. I. Jesudasan was welcomed and invited to give the inaugural address. At the commencement he reminded the delegates present that history had been made on the day of the opening of the Conference, since it had been announced that for the first time an Indian Women had that day succeeded in climbing Mt. Everest. For the Quadrennial Conference, history was being made since this is the first time that a lady presbyter has been present. Speaking on the Conference theme, the Moderator said that it was necessary for us to know the source of life before we could become co-workers, and Jesus Christ is that source. We should be able to say with Mary Magdalene on the resurrection morning, 'I have seen the Lord'. In the present-day world, crimes against women are increasing in society. Do we, the Moderator asked, see the world with the compassion and that same love that Jesus did? Only if we do that can we be co-workers with God as He himself was.

With this beginning pointing to the one with whom the women should be at work, the Moderator declared open the Sixth Quadrennial Conference of the C.S.I. Women Fellowship.

The first theme address was given later on the first day of the Conference by Mrs. Gopal Ratnam. As always, Mrs. Gopal Ratnam's address was a very challenging and stimulating one. She spoke on three occasions in the Conference.

'Women Co-workers with God at Home, in Society and in the Church.' From the beginning, she pointed out that these cannot be kept in water tight compartment but are in fact closely linked. She quoted that someone had once said 'Wherever the W.F.C. active and alive, the church is alive, and wherever the W.F. is dead, the Church is also dead'. Her talks were a clear call to all the W.F. groups to move into action and show themselves to be truly the co-workers with God. Sexual crimes and violence against women is continually increasing. Against all this what have we as Christians women done? Hindus, Muslims, Jains have all made their protest—what have we, Christian Women done? One act of violence against one woman is an act of violence against all women. Mrs. Gopal Ratnam called upon us to break the barriers of silence that isolate us from each other.

Other stimulating addresses on the same theme were given by Dr. Christopher Doraisingh, Prof. UTC, Bangalore, who spoke at the Communion Service held on Friday morning 25-5-84 conducted by the first Woman Presbyter of CSI Rev. (Mrs.) Florence Deenadayalan. At the Communion Service Dr. Doraisingh exhorted the delegates from the text II Cor. 6 : 1 few have been called as co-workers with God—Do not let it go for nothing. He endorsed what Mrs. Gopal Ratnam had said regarding the place of W.F. in the Church and quoted JAT Robinson as saying that W.F. were the Power House of the Kingdom. He declared it as every Christians men and women right to be co-workers with God. We should be yoked with God, since this is the Greek meaning of the word, so that when God moves, we move. If this is to be so, we need to know the partner with whom we are yoked. What kind of a God do we have? Dr. Doraisingh asked. He is a God who goes before us, A God of people who works in history and above all, He is active. If this is so, we too should be concerned with people. The Newspaper and activities of the world today should find a place in the programmes of W.F. We should do away with the stereotyped images which we have of women and see the New creation in Christ. Our God seems to be biased towards those who are outside of society and therefore this should be our bias also. Just as Jesus identified Himself with us in His death, so we too should identify with the many 'little deaths' of others by dowry, rape etc. We are co-workers with God in His creating work, His liberating work, His sustaining work, Salvation through the cross also has an expressing function. Dr. Doraisingh called the W.F. expose those things which are not right in the society.

Another source of inspiration was the Bible studies lead by Dr. Johnson, who was a lady pastor in Dormstadt, Germany, since 1967 and is now working with her husband in the TELC spiritual Renewal Centre at Tranquebar. Her first Bible study gave us further insight into the theme of the Conference. She tuned our thoughts again to centre on God and His character and showed how the Bible emphasizes the active qualities of God such as creation, redemption and sanctification. In Mark's Gospel, it is recorded that Jesus called 12 men to be His disciples, but we do not read of a woman being chosen. However, it is mentioned that women did travel with Jesus and served them. From this we can understand that women are His true disciples, since they did what He was doing. They served.

The fourth speaker to challenge us and point us to the high calling of being co-workers with God was Mrs. Aruna Gnanadasan who brought greetings from the All India Council of Christian Women which is part of NCC.

Mrs. Gnanadasan spoke movingly about the Bible passage, John 20 : 1-18. When Jesus saw Mary, He said, woman, why do you weep? And it is as if He is saying woman, God knows why you weep, I weep with you. Jesus then commands Mary to go and tell. How can we women respond to all that we have heard? Mrs. Gnanadasan challenged us to develop new forms of leadership and to look at the Bible in a new way. She said that women are carriers of new life. Christian women are supposed to be submissive, but we must remember that it is submission to the love of God. Women are peacemakers. In U.K. it is women who are protesting against nuclear weapons. In the Lutheran church in India it is women who are specifically praying for change.

Other highlights of the Conference were the Exhibition set up by each of the Diocese represented and opened by Sr. Jane Moses who called us not only to exhibit the work which God is doing through them in the Diocese, but also to exhibit God's great nature through their lives to the world. The first prize for the best exhibition went to Vellore Diocese and other prizes went to Tirunelvelly, Medak and Kerala.

A sale of products from each Diocese was opened by Mrs. Christine Doraisamy, formerly President of W.F. in the Trichy-Thanjavur Diocese. In her opening speech, she emphasized the importance of family life sharing and praying together in the home.

On Friday evening, a public meeting was held at which the Chief guest was the Most Rev. Thomas Fernando, Bishop of the Roman Catholic in Trichy. The meeting was followed by a cultural programme on which the girls from Holy Cross College, Trichy performed a beautiful Bharathanatyam dance in the parables of Jesus. After supper the boys from St. John's Vestry Higher Sec. School performed the play 'Daniel'.

Eucharist was celebrated each morning of the Conference. On Friday the message was given by Dr. Dora singh. On Saturday by Rt. Rev. Dr. R. Paulraj, and Sunday by Mrs. Gopal Ratnam. In his message, Dr. Paulraj spoke on the theme passage of I Cor. 3 : 9, showed how we labour in God's garden or His building. He reminded the women of their calling being that of the calling of Jesus in Luke 4 : 18, 19. The word has amounted us to bring hope to these hopeless.

Tribute was paid to the Trichy-Thanjavur Diocese for all the efforts that had been made as a team to make the Conference a success. Special mention was made of the choir which had provided music for praise and worship at all intervals in the programme. It was also much appreciated that so many presbyters were taking part behind the scenes in helping in the smooth running of the Conference.

It was with great joy that the Conference welcome Bishop of Madurai Rt. Rev. Dr. Pothiarajulu and his wife into their midst on the final day of the Conference. The Bishop led the Covenant Service held in the college Chapel on Sunday morning. Mrs. Gopal Ratnam gave the final talk in her series, namely women co-workers with God in the Church.

After the covenant service, the delegates adjourned to the Auditorium where they were given a very informative lecture on Communication by the Editor of the *South India Churchman*, Rev. Dass Babu, who is a trained Journalist and the Director of CSI communications Dept. The following were the discussion groups :

1. The Officer of W.F. groups—led by Mrs. Clara Clark, Conference Convener.
2. Theologically trained women and those interested in Theological studies—led by Rev. M. Azariah, General Secretary of Synod.
3. Those interested in village work—led by Mrs. S. Ponniah, President of Vellore Diocese W.F.
4. Sisters of CSI Sisterhood and those interested—led by Sr. Joyce Woollard and Sr. Sukumari and Sr. Tilak.

The Conference then adjourned for midday meal after which the final service of dedication was held in the Chapel led by the Vice-President of W. F. Mrs. Gladis Inbanathan. Rev. M. Azariah, the General Secretary of the Synod gave the closing address on 'Women co-workers with God in the challenging Society'. After which the delegates dispersed to the four regions of South India, returning to their places renewed by the Fellowship experienced with a deeper commitment to their high calling as co-workers with God and His people. It was resolved to hold the next Conference at Masula, Krishnagodavari Diocese.

# The Statement on the Punjab

The Joint Council of the Church of North India, the Church of South India and the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church comprising 3½ million members view with grave concern, pain and anguish the recent events in the Punjab. The need of the hour is for the entire nation to work for reconciliation and healing of wounds. We suggest that this could be effected by withdrawing the Army as soon as possible, a more cautious use of the NSA and by taking positive steps to solve all the issues involved, both political and religious.

We appeal to the Sikh Community in India and abroad and particularly to the president of the Akali Dal and the President of the SGPC to make a positive response to the appeal extended by the Government for further dialogue in order to find an amicable solution in the interest of both the Sikh Community and the nation as a whole. We also strongly urge that the sanctity of places of worship be preserved by all religious communities. We express our deep sympathy for all those who suffered during the unfortunate violent disturbances in the Punjab. We appeal to all Christian Churches to be partners with other religious communities in solidarity with the Sikh Community for the restoration of communal harmony, peace and goodwill.

We invite all churches to make a liberal financial contribution towards the restoration of the damaged portions of the temple area and for the rehabilitation of people who have suffered loss. We appeal to the Christians in the Punjab to work hand in hand and to offer all possible help. We invite all Churches to uphold in their constant prayer the people of the Punjab as well as the President, the Prime Minister and the Government of India.

To demonstrate its solidarity with all those affected by the disturbances the Joint Council decides to observe Sunday, 5th August 1984 as the Day of Prayer for the Punjab.

(Sd) MOST REV. D. C. GORAI  
*Moderator, CNI*

R. REV. DR. SUNDAR CLARKE,  
*Acting Moderator, CSI*

THE MOST REV. ALEXANDER MAR THOMA,  
*Metropolitan of the Malankara Mar Thoma  
Syrian Church*



# Consultation on Social Action Groups and the Churches in India

## AN INTERPRETATIVE REPORT

SARAL K. CHATTERJI, *Director, CISRS*

The Statement of the Consultation on the Churches and Social Action Groups unanimously upheld the search for common theological-ideological framework within which both can participate in God's mission. The Consultation, organised by the CISRS, of about eighty church leaders, social activists and representatives of Christian organisations expressed the hope 'that the Church will be one of the support structures for the groups engaged in the struggle of the people for justice and liberation'.

The Consultation was the first ever attempt to bring church leaders and social action groups together for a serious theological and ideological understanding of the concerns and issues related to social action and the churches' participation in it. The Statement and the Group Reports emanating from it should put an end to the doubts and uncertainties about the churches' perception of their own part in social action. While their attitude toward particular action groups might vary according to circumstances, the church leaders were nevertheless able to affirm their commitment to social action as part of their mission. Even with regard to concrete action of groups the consensus was that such genuine efforts should be supported by churches.

The plea for a transition from their earlier or present activities in the field of relief and development to social action in the mission of the churches and the definition of social action in Saral K. Chatterji's presentation found their theological justification in what M. M. Thomas called a transition from a prophetic to a political theology. Social action in Saral Chatterji's paper was seen in terms of ideological mobilisation with the oppressed sections of the people organising for structural transformation. In this process of struggle for changes in attitudes and structures on the part of dalits, tribals, women, and the poor in general lay the context of the Church's evangelism and mission. In a more generalised form M. M. Thomas emphasised the concept as well as the reality of the people as the subjects of their history. Quoting Mathew Lamb, he told the Consultation that mission meant both identification with the victims of injustice and going beyond it to be with them in their struggle to transform the structures of oppression.

This transition from a prophetic to a political theology, or from identification to social action, was also apparent in the themes of the presentations by the Most Rev. D. C. Gorai and Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorius. Bishop Gorai asked for a self-critical review of the churches' activities and defined the task in terms of enabling 'the voiceless to have voice, the poor to have bases from which

to fight for justice'. His analysis of the different modes of identification and involvement indicated a change in emphasis in the thinking of some church leaders. Mar Gregorius emphasised the change of social and economic structures as the goals of social action by the groups and the churches. While the groups must have strategies to deal with the economic processes of production and distribution as well as the use of science and technology, all concerned including the churches must take up the struggle for the Harijans, women and tribals.

Ms Ivy Khan in her talk referred to the struggles of women for a life of completeness, equality and partnership and demanded their proper share in decision-making in the church and outside. The Consultation which included many members from women's groups underlined the need for strengthening women's action on the questions of the social, economic and legal rights. The Joint Women's Programme's book on the Changes in Christian Personal Laws was released during the Consultation.

All these discussions in the realm of theory — theology, ideology, etc. — were found to be relatively easier to accept. Equally important issues were the contradiction to the generally subscribed to theologies and ideologies of the churches and social action. In this area the Consultation considered the points of conflict and the grounds of suspicion or mistrust in the relationship between the churches and action groups, the questions of funding and intermediaries, credibility of the churches and action groups, etc. A. Xavier, a social activist from Dindigul Tamilnadu, presented a balanced analysis of some of the contradictions in his talk. The growing institutionalisation in the churches and the concentration of property and wealth in their hands, quite out of proportion to their size, were factors which distorted the mission of the churches. The lack of accountability in the churches, the victimisation of persons questioning the church authorities, baseless propaganda against groups or their supporters featured in his presentation as well as in Saral Chatterji's paper.

But, at the same time, Xavier's reflections on the dynamics of social action groups and the account of their self-criticism elevated the discussion in the Consultation to the level of serious and committed exercise. He brought out most vividly the dilemma of dedicated social activities working with outside funds, the poignancy of their situation of repression, maligning propaganda and isolation on the one hand, and the resources they were tempted with, divisions or disunity they were threatened with as a result of the politicking by some of the agencies and their aspirational intermediaries on the other. As Xavier put it, "the

inter-play of huge sums in the field has been a constant headache to committed groups. Local bosses either buy up groups or promote new ones without reference to the interests of the local people due to their influential position with the agencies. Any politicking at the level of groups is bound to affect the work and ultimately does harm to the people . . . any attempt at breaking existing groups or promoting new ones in places where others are already doing substantial work is a disservice to the cause of unity among the unorganised masses.' This indictment of politicking in the field of social action was supported by the experience of others reflected in Saral Chatterji's paper : 'Contradictions and distortions arise also when social action is used as a convenient stepping stone to power, not the power of the people, but that which goes with controlling and 'coordinating' social action groups. It would appear that . . . we would soon have a breed of professional coordinators whose functions will be confined to being intermediaries between donor agencies and action groups.'

A support structure, in contrast, must consist of programmes of social action including assistance to and solidarity with action groups ; such a structure must itself be involved in social action. As one of the Consultation groups described it, support structures could be 'other organisations which involve themselves in social action or in related activities.' At the instance of this group the Consultation agreed 'that the Churches and other organisations should extend their positive cooperation and support to any social action, promotive of justice and human dignity, initiated by groups irrespective of their religious or ideological affiliations.'

The Consultation considered the question of accountability of both the churches and the action groups. Bishop Gorai in his presentation dealt with the accountability of the churches' programmes to the people. A. Xavier and Saral Chatterji discussed this issue as related mainly to action groups. Xavier put the question thus : 'Accountability is a rare commodity in today's public life. . . . Many a Church leader has demanded that Action Groups should be accountable. But the whole question is to whom should the Action Groups be accountable ? . . . It is to the people, and primarily to the people only, that Action Groups are accountable. . . . As far as the Action Groups are concerned, accountability is not measured by an arithmetic formula but by qualitative commitment . . . The fact that Action Groups have survived the onslaught of malicious propaganda and calculated character assassination goes to prove that the groups enjoy the confidence of the people. And that alone matters.'

While it was not possible to speak about all action groups or programmes, the Consultation was told how a

large section of action groups maintain their accountability to the supporters, the authorities and to the people.

In the light of these discussions on the subject, the feeling of the Consultation was summed up by P. B. Santram, the General Secretary of the Church of North India, and others in their observation that the question of accountability was to be seen in the larger context of the community and the people.

The centrality of Jesus and his relationship with the oppressed people in the mission of the Churches as well as in social action was a constant point of reference for the Consultation. In the worship sessions as well as in discussions this awareness enabled the participants to see the contours of a Christ-centred fellowship without barriers, a fellowship in which the churches, activities, the oppressed people participated in the mission of Christ. The devotions led by Bishop Paulose Mar Paulose, the Rev. Father Bra Faleiro, S.J., the Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius and Bishop S. K. Parmar reminded the participants that the struggle for justice was part of the process of the total salvation in Jesus Christ. Consequently the churches and other organisations must be in that struggle. As Bishop Paulose Mar Paulose said in the opening worship : 'If we are reluctant to cooperate with the social action groups or secular movements, because the existence of the Church is thereby threatened, we are of little faith, for then we do not believe in the power of the living God. . . . Faith in the living God who is lord of the world and of the church knows no fear concerning the future of the Church'. The oneness of all humanity, particularly the struggling humanity, and their fellowship without the boundaries of religion was brought home to the Consultation by the participation in the worship of people of different faiths through readings, singing of hymns and dances.

The Consultation attached great importance to the task of fresh articulations of faith and the search for a truly people oriented ideology rooted in the experiences, struggles and aspirations of the oppressed sections of our society. The possibility of fulfilling these tasks was seen in the mutual help and cooperation between the churches and social action groups. This was a process of study and action, documentation and sharing of experience in which the theological-ideological understanding of mission and social action could emerge.

The Consultation marked the beginning of this process and it ended with the hope that the churches, action groups would come forward to continue this work of dialogue and understanding. It was expected that follow-up efforts would be made at the regional and local levels.



# Our Visit to West Germany

(REPORT ON CSI-EMS REVERSE PROGRAMME)

21st May to 21st June, 1984, Stuttgart, West Germany

We the undersigned visitors from the Church of South India under visit exchange programme have great pleasure in submitting the following report on our experiences regarding our visits to various Churches, institutions, church gatherings etc. in Southwest Germany.

At the outset, the EMS had arranged orientation programme inviting representatives of the donor agencies who posted us with the various information of their activities. We were also supplied with information and programmes for the following weeks. The group was further divided into four batches being sent to different areas namely Baden, Wurttamberg and Oberhessen.

After visiting all the places, the groups have returned to Stuttgart on the 18th of June, 1984. The groups met on the 19th and evaluated their experiences. The following observations and suggestions for future programmes are the salient.

It was the general impression of all the members of the group that they have been warmly received by the churches, institutions and other political and religious organizations at various functions, meetings and festivals. We were very hospitably entertained at our different host families. It was found that the church life in rural areas was more active than it is in the bigger towns. Young people were found taking more active part in church music. Women usually outnumbered in all church gatherings. Christian members were found more committed. Big church festivals which were organized brought both young and old together. Spirit of giving seems to be on the increase. Generally the upkeep of the church is being taken care of. Special services for children in the churches are a regular feature on all Sundays. Young people are being confirmed after one full year preparation.

Families in rural areas are together bound with love. During holidays many families spend their time on outings. Discipline and honesty are the core of life. Standard of living is quite high. The competition in respect of running industries is very healthy, sharing the technical know-how in establishing and running industry.

Educational system is indigenous and highly scientific with emphasis on professional and job oriented programmes. Merits of the people are the only criteria in their pursuits of higher learning.

Administration in all government levels is found to be very efficient and systematic. The network of the highways and the traffic system are well-planned and organized.

The various groups, to their dismay, have found the attendance in ordinary Sunday worships as poor and discouraging. Youths are drifted away from the church life which seems to them as old-fashioned and outdated.

The aged people are living lonely and isolated life. People have become more and more materialistic and are being adopted to the life of automation. Alcoholism and drug addiction among youth in particular are on the increase—resulting in road accidents and health hazards. Parents in rich homes seem to have no control over their children. There are many homeless and unemployed people.

The group made the following suggestion for future exchange programmes between CSI and EMS :

1. Selection of delegates : Members from various walks of life or specialized group may be selected. Selection of the delegates should be communicated one year prior to the exchange programme.
2. One full year is needed for the delegates for preparation namely orientation, exchange of information regarding programmes, individual wishes, adequate material on CSI and places of visit like slides, etc. ....
3. Interpreters who know both the language of the countries and the background of the areas and people should be chosen to be with the delegates throughout their stay.
4. The programme should be spread out for six weeks. Visits to many different places be arranged. Every visitor should get enough time to speak in public gatherings namely church services, festivals, etc.
5. Delegates on their return to their respective places in Church of South India should take time and opportunity to share their experiences with congregations, institutions, etc. personally as far as possible—under the guidance of their respective dioceses.

On the whole the group is very much impressed on their experiences in the life and activities of the churches and institutions in South-west Germany under the auspices of EMS and under partnership programme between CSI and EMS. The whole group express their heartfelt thanks to the India Secretary, General Secretary and the officers of EMS and CSI and also the pastors, lay leaders and host families for the great concern and love they have extended overwhelmingly during our stay. We wish and pray that this bond of love under the partnership programme may be built up more and more stronger in future with the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the extension of His Kingdom.

## Visitors from the Church of South India

SUGUNA SWAMIRAJ—Trichy-Tanjore Diocese

A. G. JAYASINGH—Madras Diocese

T. R. S. SUBHAKARA RAO—Krishna Godavari Diocese

V. O. ZACHARIAH—North Kerala Diocese

K. J. JOSEPH—Medak Diocese

MARATHAKAVALLI DAVID—South Kerala Diocese

E. N. CHANDRAKUMAR—Karnataka Central Diocese

N. C. BARNABAS—North Karnataka Diocese

## MEDAK DIOCESE

### *Supreme Court Appoints Bishop P. Victor Premasagar as the Administrator*

Two groups of the Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches claimed to be the duly elected members of the General Council and sought to exercise the powers of the Council. Suits were filed in several courts by the groups against each other and finally the matter went up to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court appointed Mr. G. Venkatarama Sastry, a retired Judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court as Administrator primarily to hold the elections. However, the Administrator so appointed exercised other powers too. Aggrieved by it, some of the members of the Samavesam filed an application before the Supreme Court to replace Mr. G. Venkatarama Sastry by one of the Church leaders in India. Accordingly the Supreme Court replaced him by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Premasagar, Bishop in Medak, to hold elections and for the purpose of carrying on the day-to-day administration of the Samavesam.

The Court further observed, 'All nominations made by the erstwhile Administrator to interdenominational bodies or organisations or other such organizations shall stand cancelled with immediate effect'.... 'All affiliations of new churches and permission for opening of new churches granted by the erstwhile Administrator shall stand cancel and have no effect.'

## KRISHNA-GODAVARI DIOCESE

It was a joyful day to see eleven deacons and two Presbyters to be ordained by the Rt. Rev. T. B. D. Prakasa Rao, Bishop in Krishna-Godavari Diocese on 24th June 1984 at 9 a.m., in St. Paul's Church, Vijayawada. It was a beautiful sight to see the clergy in their colourful ecclesiastical garments going to the Alter in procession passing through a big gathering of waiting worshippers and devotees.

‘Our Bread for Tomorrow.....—(Contd. from p. 14)

nor can we break bread around the table of the Lord without activity seeking and working in the present, the eschatological wholeness for all.

Finally, the social implications of such a prayer are also so decisive. If I recognize that what I have as my bread today is only a sign of the fact that God will feed and satisfy *all*, then I am forced to seek actively the hastening of the day when hunger and thirst will be no more, when the cry of oppressed will be heard in our streets no more. In the process, I find that my temptation for inordinate consumption of food and drink is radically challenged. Over-eating or over-spending on private pleasures is adjudged as my *robbing* my neighbour of the promised bread. From a careless use of water or electricity or any other form of energy to a wilful misuse of time, talent and resources, all these become an outrage to the life of the kingdom. For it robs others of their promised bread of the morrow. In fact, the prayer 'Give us this day the bread of the morrow' adjudicates any wasting of resources as a social outrage and an outrage against our God who

Rev. K. Nathaniel, President, Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, Guntur was invited to preach the word of God on the occasion. First of all, he conveyed loving greetings on behalf of three and half lakhs of Christians, 250 pastors and many Institutions of Lutheran Church. A helpful message was brought to the ordinands and the church members on various aspects of the ministry.

All of the eleven deacons and two presbyters ordinands had their theological studies in Hindustan Bible Institute, Madras, and after that many of them worked as evangelists for four to six years and they were appointed as apprentice pastors in various parishes for a year. During this one year period they have also undergone ministerial training at the Retreat and Training Centre, Machilipatnam three times for ten days each at the interval of four months. After having satisfactory observation by the Bishop the ordination service was arranged.

The ordinands' retreat was led by the Bishop and Rev. J. R. Muthyalu, the Pastoral Board Secretary who presented the candidates for ordination in the service. About twenty-five clergy were present from the Diocese and Rev. Abhishekam Bunyan, Dean, HBI, Madras, Rev. Dr. Daniel, Director, Suvartha Vani were also present as guests. Rev. Ch. Joel Alfred Samuel the Presbyter of St. Paul's Church has taken good leading in the worship and other arrangements for this occasion. On this memorable day KONDA Families offered an electric organ in memory of their forefathers and the Bishop blessed and dedicated for the use of Celestial music of Christian worship in St. Paul's Church.

Mr. J. D. Saunders, the Diocesan Treasurer arranged for Ordination Dinner at Bishop Azariah Hostel where many friends and relatives of the ordinands and the Executive Committee members also took part in it.

REV. P. J. CHRISTOPHER,  
Correspondent, Masula.

wills abundant life for all. In the light of this prayer, the only criterion for the rightful use of resources is its being conducive to the fulfilment of God's promise of wholeness *to all*. In the light of this prayer, one is led to hold that the most common claim that one has, namely the *private right* to possess for ones own sake, is contrary to God's ways. Sharing all in common and with one another symbolised by breaking bread together repeatedly is a hallmark of a spirit filled community (Acts 2 : 45, 46).

Thus a simple but decisive alteration in my prayer seems to call me to a radical alteration of my life-style itself into a life determined by the vision of God's promise of wholeness for all at all cost and by a vision of the struggles and aspiration of millions for liberation and wholeness. Such an altered style-of-life will both be internally integrated and other-directed. It is the *messianic life style*, manifested in Jesus of Nazareth. It was he who taught us to pray.

Ought we not, then, boldly pray as he taught us :  
Our bread for tomorrow give us this day.

### A NEW NAME FOR THE MISSIONARY?

Canon Simon Barrington-Ward, General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, would like to drop the term 'missionaries' and call them 'mission partners'.

He makes the suggestion in the latest issue of the *CMS News-letter*. He sees the future base for world evangelism and mission not primarily in the West but in the whole church world-wide, 'pooling its resources in people, insights and money through a gift exchange'.

He goes on: 'Those who come and go in this service really need a new title today. I would suggest calling them 'mission partners' rather than 'missionaries', a term which carries overtones of patronage, of authority and of the dominant individual in many areas of the world.'

'It is a term which still risks suggesting the kind of people who may be powerful achievers in their own right, making their impression on others in a way that can sometimes become a bit self-sufficient and impervious.'

''Mission partner'' to me evokes more of what the best missionaries always have been—self-effacing intermediaries, midwives or matchmakers for the Gospel.'

The church in this country seemed to have difficulty in receiving help. Overseas Christians were asking to join with us in our efforts at renewed mission.

'When they do come,' he goes on, 'we tend either to overlook them or to make them into a kind of star turn. They are not enabled to become part of the ordinary joy and agony of the local churches' struggle for life'.

Canon Barrington-Ward asserts that mission 'there' must all the time be linked with mission 'here' and he adds: 'We have to fund not just an aid agency or a project but a relationship'.

CMS is already beginning to use the term 'mission partner' in relation to its missionaries and volunteers overseas and those who come for at least two years to share in mission in this country through its interchange scheme. But Canon Barrington-Ward made it clear this week that there was no question of CMS changing the name of the society.

—*CMS News Release*

### The Challenge . . . . —(cond. from page 9)

exists an impression that church women are only interested in pietism and their own communal interests—we will have to show that this is not true by going out of the confines of the church and express solidarity with all women in the movements they pioneer. We cannot expect them to come to us.

### Conclusion

There is no need for us to despair because the Christian image of woman is a liberating image. The infinite worth of all human beings and the possibility of their redemption are basic tenets of the Christian faith. 'Jesus' life on earth from beginning to end outlines a paradigm for women's place. His actions appalled his contemporaries, dumbfounded his critics and flabbergasted his disciples,' write two women in their book 'All we're meant to be.' The Indian church both its women and men must courageously cut through the barbed wire of cultural custom and fear for change and follow the one who promised men and women, 'If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.' Let us as co-workers with God work towards this promised freedom.

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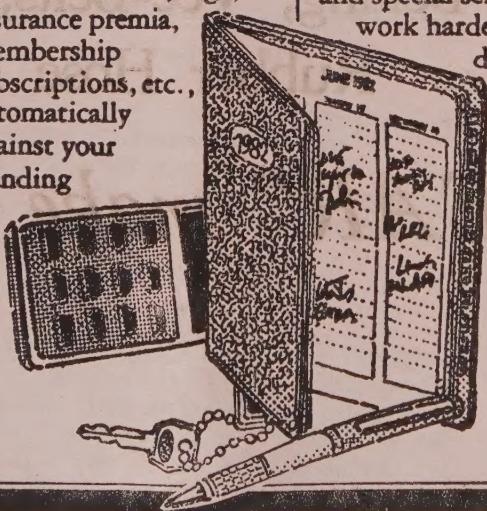
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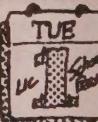
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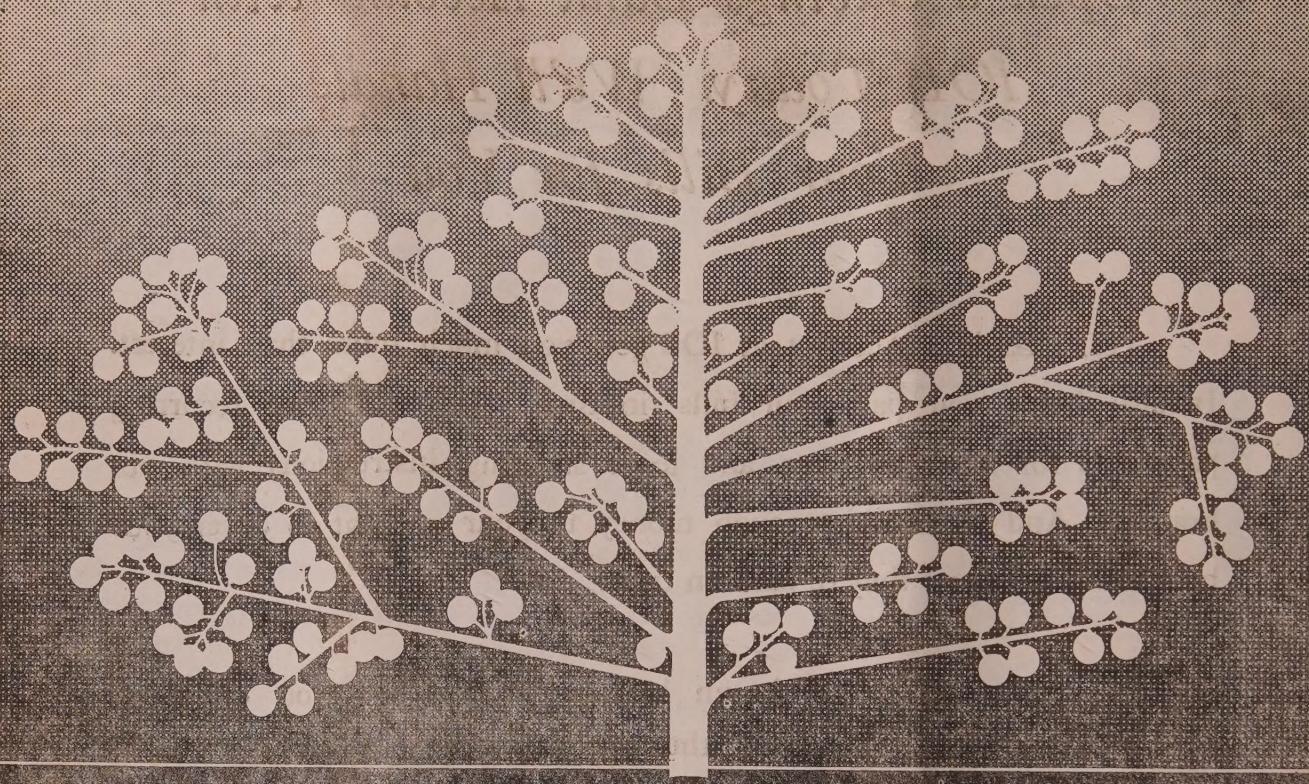
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